

INVOCATO



WILLIAM F. DEVAULT

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EDITED BY L.B. WIELENGA

TO AN UNKNOWN GODDESS

A MEANDER FROM THE AUTHOR

I have heard, on more than one occasion, that my books have always been “too broad” in appeal. That, somehow, I am not providing a “definitive argument” for posterity. That I need to provide one book, one volume of my works, that is “the bomb.”

Okay, let’s rock.

What you hold in your hands is a collection of works that I, and a select panel of peers, hold to be, if not my most well-known or popular works, my legacy works. If my poems are my children, these are the overachievers, the ones that make a father proud.

I include in this volume a few works that have been in previous volumes, works such as “from out of the city” and “We Owe Debt to Memory.”

But also some lesser-exposed works, including “TRIUMPH” which is presented in print for the first time ever here. Forgive the small print on a few works, I am a purist on line wraps.

I would like to acknowledge the love, support and honesty of some truly wonderful peers and friends who have helped me get this far in my life and my writings.

To my parents, who made me possible.

To my children, who make me proud.

To L.B. Wielenga, who edited this volume. She has gone from protégé to friend, and a worthy editor. I am delighted to have someone to fall back on.

Let us not forget Janet Innes, who edited many of my previous books so ably. She has been more than an editor, a friend as well.

To those whom I treasure and love, and (a much smaller list) those who love in return. To Nancy, Teri, Elizabeth, Jezze, Gina, Karla, Tom, Alan, Dave, Robert, Mark, Becky, Jan, Joey, Anastacia, Brian, Peri, Elric, Dante, Larry, Janet, Pat, Chanti, Carole, Kristina, Ann and Alisha. You are free to sort out your own feelings. These are mine.

To my friends, who make me safe. To my enemies, who make me stronger. To every person who ever had the moral courage to ask for the truth, and every person with the integrity to live in the light.

To those who have inspired my works, sired my dreams and fired my passions. The Amomancer begins his rituals.

Let the summoning begin.

WILLIAM F. DEVAULT

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WE OWE DEBT TO MEMORY

A lonely tale is bound to wind
around a spindled point,
to make of us a metaphor,
twin avatars, to anoint.

And there are those who will relate
our falls and victories,
and sell our shells in necklaces
declared to cure disease.

For we owe debt to memory.
And those who bear the ark.
The acolytes of ancient nights
we melted in the dark.

We can not burn at this degree
and not outshine, at least,
the dimmer stars, if not the moon,
and sundry suns, released.

If you dare not to be a mold
for dreams of those unborn,
then tip your hat and hand and flee
this pilgrim, bent and worn.

For we owe debt to memory.
And those who bear the ark.
The acolytes of ancient nights
we melted in the dark.

CARTOUCHE

cartouche.

my fingers melt the surface of the stone.

I, alone, know the meaning

of the symbols I leave.

names unpronounceable.

truths unrenounceable.

enigma for the stoic sleuths

that will ponder the meaning

of words without words.

sounds without sounds.

dreams without end.

cut into the living stone

to bear witness

to a time when Gods walked this earth.

and spoke only to be heard.

THE POISONED PEN

The troubadour, he knows the truth, unsuspected and unspoken,
that tears the soul of every man whose heart and mind lay broken:
Dreamers die, for a poet's lie, at peace with their transgressions.

The miller and the blacksmith are at peace with their professions;
the priest will carry on his trade and take the strange confessions.
The troubadour, he knows the truth, unsuspected and unspoken.

The sentry knows to challenge foes when in the night he's woken
from the disturbing thought born from what is in the barrels oaken:
Dreamers die, for a poet's lie, at peace with their transgressions.

The mistress and the novice seek each her own perfections.
The baker fires his ovens to be lost in his confections.
The troubadour, he knows the truth, unsuspected and unspoken.

Warriors die for causes both obscured and held as the slogan
of their leaders, prayers in the shadows of Holy vows now broken.
Dreamers die, for a poet's lie, at peace with their transgressions.

Take these words as a sign of faith and as my memory's token;
the realization stands apart, against all false impressions.
The troubadour, he knows the truth, unsuspected and unspoken:
Dreamers die, for a poet's lie, at peace with their transgressions.

THIRTY TWO FEET
(PER SECOND PER SECOND)

splintered glass, pass the plate and hate the widow for her two cents' worth.
earth birthing bright premonition of the precognizant memory made mock
in the hands of the clock stalking us with the talking blues of hues of red, bled
from leprous thoughts caught on taut trotlines, hooks digging in to secure
the pure insecurity of our assurances and reassurances that stances dance
in the light of a night, white with wonder and thunder and under it all
a call to hope. hopping on one foot, then another, mother to madness and dreams
left to steam until cool enough to touch in such a manner meant to vent
our vexed and sexed pretext, wrapped in a tapestry of tepid transparencies
to justify our jostled juices, jet to whet then wet then set us on the path
of least persistence. insisting on assisting us with the rationale of love.
and I would gladly pay twice the price of Odin for the wisdom to know the truth.

SACRED SMILE

your smile is sacred to me.
would that a chalice of communion wine
hold half the redemptive power of your kiss,
for faith is a turbulent dream in this age,
this age in which your grace in saving me
from the false religions of self-cut idols
of balsa and tin and cheap velour.
pure runs the water tested by fires
caught and contained and feeding, seeding
the clouds with the essence of life.
for you are the fire and the rain
and the sun and the clouds and the sky.
and your smile is sacred to me.

PHOENIX AND GOLEM

phoenix and golem.
handmade, manmade, fire and clay.
the blaze of, the haze of, self-immolation.
an act of self preservation.
brass feathers quickened in the flesh
of clay and phosphorous.
a porous purpose to usurp us
when we finally get traction
on the scrith of life.
awake, my creation.
awake and open wide the iron jowls
to howls of Eden and Armageddon.
awake. pass through the sands
like water on the beach,
reaching for the leeching pull
of buried rivers of thought not
yet assembled in coherence.

but ready for the kiln to fire
at temperatures where clay melts
and mythologies turn to ash.
awake to seize the fates
in clawed hands, iron bands
that will cling against the sting
of all the scorpions of resistance,
persistence being a virtue of the damned.

SANTA ANA WINDS

Like a wave of fire descending in judgement.

Burning me to the quick.

Thick with self-denial,
the trial of the Romantique.

Seeking truth
in the shallows of the rain forest,
poorest of the depths.

Having slept with the demons,
awakened to the silence
and foresworn the violence

in the best Buddheo-Christian traditions
made proof of the truth of a lie accepted with a smile,

while

all the while

knowing that in a medicated haze,
all praise is lies.

Pray for the wind.

Pray it will not be defiled by
this child of my blackened heart,
that my final torment will not be as epic
as the tragedy of false hopes,
fed the bread bought at Borders.
Filling chalices
with the urine of mad marketers
made rich on pain gained at the cost of the children.
And I
will ride the winds,
even if the only vector left is
down.
Down to the foot of the cliffs of the legends.

Pray for the wind.

GIBBOUS

the shameless moon, illuminating all
the sins I imagined with you.
scheming, dreaming of the frail silk
made window to the touch of my eyes
as you crossed the room into my arms.
into my soul.
into my night.
and I thanked the moon
for the pale blue curve of your breasts.

MONUMENT

I crave a cup. a bowl. a mug of your heart's steel.
unsheathed before by mortal or god for rage or lust
of things both unneeded and forever unreal...
it is the quintessence...and the dust.

dreams do not stand before you and call the blade.
dreams do not walk or breathe or love you as I do.
and can. and will, if given just a moment's shade
from the moon of pain and the stars that lie.

my words shall be eternal. syntax monuments of you.
beneath the tread of centuries, stone shall fall.
paint peel. music rise to ears long deaf. but now...
and from this night on...you are immortal.

FLOURISH

the wet slap of membranes catching wind as I fall.
all memory cut and cobbled together like leather
kissed by the craftsman's practice. he exacts his
price after the cuir bouilli is shaped, draped over
the stone form made warm by the hot oils' cascade.

tints of red and chases of gold,
rolled together to calculate
the arc of the archangels
in the taking of the blade into a heart
that never dies.

blood richer than a foundry's furnace in fire and iron.
tattoo'd batwings spread to the elegant edge of emotion
held hostage in a heart of gold, older than the first song.
newer than the dreams of a child's first moment of sentience,
escaping to run barefoot through a spring's wet grass,
sliding and falling but never calling for a quarter less
than Tarleton's.

new suns everyday to chase the chill
and the will of the epic picadors
to drive rough needles
filled with the venom of life into the heart of a winged bull,
fully ignorant of the tragic error of their logic.
for angels and dragons,
wings feathery or leathery,
open with a purpose to rise above
the love of self and find
resurrection
before the cheering crowd grows silent
so that he can hear the charging hooves.
coming down like thunder from Valhalla.
an instant too late to dodge fate.
but he falls with a flourish.

THE UNICORNS

Please come awhile, remain and play.

The unicorns won't come today.

The faeries and their virtued kin

shall stay away, to paint my sin.

with ancient red and angry fire.

Please come to me and linger, please.

I do not mock, I dare not tease.

Just bring with you an honest smile

and share with me, for all the while,

a love of life and true desire.

The unicorns no longer guard

the meadow just beyond my yard.

They snort with shame and true disdain

upon a hope of ages' pain

and brand me, by their pride, a liar.

BRAGI, AWAKENING IN HIS TOMB

cracked and battered escarpments of my heart,
running crimson and gold with blood and amber
from my faulted, vaulted passions. rodents clamber
up the thorny roses grown on that decay. part
predator. part prey. part symbiote and parasite.
grandiose and pathetic. the warm wine runs away,
spilled by careless hands and hearts, every day.
I pluck cithara strings to wake the flower of night.

I play for you the melodies.

I pray for you the memories.

I cry for you the threnodies.

and barter still the remedies.

cold and wasted thoughts I would know no more,
a monument to lovers' kiss and merg'd minds.
as Odysseus bore the stick that finally blinds
the sleeping giant. barren bones and paramour.
epic tales of love and lies and truths unflown.
love: an addiction and a venom I use and sell.
thumbscrewed to the walls in my dungeon cell.
murmuring mad words and dreams outgrown.

FROM OUT OF THE CITY

From out of the city came words. Small words.
Words like lead pellets, ringing on armour, stinging on flesh
and carrying a message of rage and honor defended.

The prophet spoke in broken syntax, the facts spoke
for themselves in time and he was carried to the city square
to be stoned to death, in accordance with the law.

Morning slid over the horizon as if on rails invisible,
and split the night like Trinity. Infinity seemed possible
except for the silence of the waking world, one eye open.

Mourn the night and rise. Rise to your feet and climb
the hill you always said you'd climb before the end of all things.
For it is upon you, even in the optimism of dawn.

Mourn the night and rise. Rise to your vision, rise!
The afterlife is not waiting for you, but you for it,
and the madness of martyrs may call it too soon.

Mourn the night and rise. Spread your bastard wings
and catch the feral winds that come on the sun's fire
to sweep away the night into small shadow piles in corners.

From out of the city came words. Final words.
Words like Eden. Gethsemane. Golgotha. And then.
And then. And then, the silence. The violence of indifference.

SHADOWS IN THE SHADE

a sobriquet turns epithet
the prophecy is made.
the diamonds turn to withered coals.
the emerald dress, to jade.
a lover's kiss has gone amiss,
the warmth too soon shall fade,
and I am left to contemplate
the shadows in the shade.

the tapestry binds until the last cut
unravels the patterns we'd bound,
hidden in weavings and testified leavings,
the needle, once fabled, is found.

and thus the riddle rides the hides
of beasts of legend and myth,
cutting with blades of lost serenades,
the soul from the troubadour's pith.

a sobriquet turns epithet
the prophecy is made.
the diamonds turn to withered coals.
the emerald dress, to jade.
a lover's kiss has gone amiss,
the warmth too soon shall fade,
and I am left to contemplate
the shadows in the shade.

DAMASCUS, MOVEMENT THREE

aphrodite
does not barter her beauty
for hollow promise.
wisdom girds glib eloquences in a veil of truth,
the sooth that soothes us
like the blood of aloe fresh cut from a garden
where we swore we would never walk again.
jasmine.
a thought slides like electric lovers
across a sea of tranquility
where the dust is kicked skyward
by the blue flames and boots of the explorers.
I awaken from the dream.
sightless.
paralyzed.
the cold catalepsy illustrating the fear of death
I had forgotten.

but there is an incandescence in the darkness.
and, for once, I sink back to sleep,
aware of God.
and cognizant of the pattern in the tapestry
as I await Rome.
content that Damascus was no illusion
this time.

PENANCE

against the odds.
against the gods forced on us
by friend or foe, we fight.
beyond mere will,
where weapons kill more than
just flesh, slaying truth and light.

we have been cast, as tumbling dice,
amid the mortals who repel us...
that would sell us for a smile
from cold idols carved of ice.
we have fallen. and have risen.
and taken penance given, every mile.

IN THE ARMS OF THE DRAGON

I kiss the beauty of your complexities.
your scars are a familiar terrain
to my lips, cut as they have been
a thousand times for greater
and lesser crimes unpenanced.
I do not doubt your beauty
and in the arms of the dragon
you fit like a gem in the forehead
of a smiling Buddha, alive and dreaming
of new winds yet to blow and yet
you seem to know where, if not when
they will take you, make you
all that you are already in the arms of the Dragon.

HORIZON

there was a season
when I was stronger.
when days lasted longer and wind filled my sails.
there was a reason
for love's trial and error.
ghosts in the mirror were yesterdays' tales.
the winds now are memory.
hope and illusion.
pain and confusion inherit my gold.
but I, I shall live on
the crusts stained with jelly,
filling my belly with morsels and mould.
there is yet a season,
with dragons returning,
the fires yet burning shall lift to the skies.
there must be a reason
to seek the horizons.
to sail for the islands with unclouded eyes.

my sails are of iron. the sun is my shepherd.
and I am the leopard.
the lion. the beast.
alone at the tiller. I seek no more portage.
the winds of an old rage
shall yet drive me east.

TRIUMPH

Carry back the fallen, they are now no more than obstacles and eyesores on the battlefields,
worthy hearts that met their fates as fodder to a purpose yet obscure and oblique, seeking no
validation for their immolation in the fireflower field that sealed their epitaphs in eclectic blue and red,
steady hands on the rudder of the boat that sails the River Styx and picks its way through carrion
feeding the lampreys of lethargy and the lachrymal leeches that bloat on their own poisons flowed
like rows of roses mowed down in a mad gardener's harvest of slash and burn horticulture.

Carry back the fallen, for they deserve proper burial away from the emotions of this carnage,
this new age of children playing make-believe around the grieving truths that emasculate dreams
in the sad, seamless shroud of a religion of the damned. We are the vanguard and the residual force,
the dessert course for the ghouls that pick their way through the bazaar banquet tables of the dead.

Heroes have fled to lick their wounds and toast their victories, leaving us to save what we can
of the sanity we possessed before Odin chose to wrest from us the wisdom traded for a single eye.

Carry back the fallen, for in this season we possess not the reason to understand their sacrifice,
pain raining down like the tears of hungry children we'd rather buy a book of lies than feed for our need
is so selfish, our pain so intimate, our terror so consummate, our dreams so delicate they will shatter
with the first touch of a gloved hand, standing without legs in a room without a floor in a world without God,
getting even with the odds we set when we wet our whetstones and honed our sharp tongues to lance
like a poignard into the heart of the matter that will shatter and scatter us like the debris of freedom.

Carry back the fallen, for they need not see what next I do. For the victory is of more import than my life.
Where blades have bent, I have sent them back to the fire to be reformed as steel, not pig-iron, tempered
by the winds I call in necromancies dark and deadly, I said we would triumph, and so we shall. Hide
your face from the light I call, for I will not take responsibility for your soul, crusaders come and go and
slowly we have earned every inch of our position in this game of rogues and wizards, but only one song
will be sung when the histories are recited tonight around a bright bonfire of sacred woods and thistles.

William F. DeVault - INVOCATO

Carry back the fallen. For then will I be alone, without the staring eyes of the dreamers locked forever in a hidden instant. Incant me the words I swore to take to war if love and fear would ever go sour, the power is not a madman's riddle, but the middle of the sphere where nearly all of us hide our chitinous mantras, enchanted with our own venoms and vindications, paying reparations for a trail of abominations we would tell lies to hide from the child inside us, growing on our virtues and our sins to be stillborn as we have torn our own amniotic sacs to force our way into a world where few get out alive, striding in baby steps.

Carry back the fallen. And I will be among them. And there will be no songs tonight, no dances to mark this victory. For in triumph, we are all victims of our own basest natures, fated to mate with the incubi and succubi of our own vanity. The only war worth fighting is in our own hearts and souls. Horatius died a suicide, in some philosophies. Think what you please, dream what you will, say what you must, but dust still dries a poet's tongue to the point that the words are only words and the word I heard a lifetime ago must now ultimately sleep or perish, beneath a metaphor'd field I once heard of...barren with snow.

EPITAPH

don't follow me beyond the hills.

 this path is mine, alone.

and I shall wander on these trails

 when life and time are gone.

in my words, recall my presence.

 each tear. each stolen kiss.

 and magnify your inheritance

 whenever you do this.

don't follow me beyond the hills.

 this path is mine, alone.

and I shall wander on these trails

 when life and time are gone.

RADIANT TIGERS

welcome to the land of radiant tigers.
bright eyes like coherent beaming ruby rods
fiercely piercing the fearjungle of life.
pouncing like Lord Byron on a first draft.

poets glide on the slip and slide emotions
whetted and wet with the potions of passion.
sweetmeats met in a feast of least persistence,
an insistence on the order of a random universe.

roadwork with the soda jerk mixology of words
that effervesce with a laugh in the daft draught
of expressions caught caterwauling to glance
off the silvered glass mirrors of albedo'd radiance.

welcome to the land of radiant tigers.
citrus stripes on cocoa black, warm as memory.
cold as calculations in an impatient ledger,
counting found funds, lost time, and three deep breaths.

COPPER

I am the path, but not the Shrine.

The way, but not the end.

Friend, but not lover, another fills that role,

and in my soul I know

I am the light, but not the page.

Perhaps, in times, the river,

and sometimes the falls,

but when the lakeside calls

the water is no longer of me.

For that is not the role I fill.

Not understudy, but transitional player,
given to the range and skills granted
in this enchanted, if graceless age.

The one you may even call on
when he wears your dagger, deep.

And you may not understand, or care,
the essence of my part in this,
the dance of love and life.

But that is why you cannot stay,
and I must, in the second act, away.

GOBLINS IN MY ATTIC

in the depths of my depression
I find my self-expression
increases geometrically, to help me on my way.
this creation is not static
as the goblins in my attic
break down the walls to find the light of day.

MY LIFE

My life. It is my life to make of it what I choose.

I will win, and lose

and smile more often than not.

Courage will give me hope. Hope will give me

strength. And strength

will give me the courage to seek new truths.

And I will never love without a sense

of wonder and awe at the

infinite possibilities within the human heart...

and the beauty of dreams, held iron and ironic

within even the most tragic

fall from grace and the dreams of the damned.

And I will not be given to despair, for I have stood

in fires I could not fathom

and held my breath until death seemed sibling

to the pain within my soul. For this experiment

of my life will have validity

within the scientific method of the universe.

NIGHT OF A THOUSAND COLOURS

crisp, cold and calculating.
the proper pronouncements
on tongues cut from leather
birthed in a sea of tranquility
and madness.

the blossom on a daffodil
crushed, a poet's hushed
prayers. and stairs that
ascend a tower, friend
to the night of a thousand colours.

duller than plain song.
duller than a white
plastic knife, serrated
ridges worn off on the
edge of the picnic table
where we spread a feast...

halfway down the road
to the farthest ocean.
another catalog case
of illusions and fantasies
to sit on a shelf forever,
like a lost clay wizard, forever

wondering of his exile from
his brother. another time.
another place. another face
and another crime. red
as lips in shy surrender.
indigo as the night.
hallucinations.
benedictions.
and sacred vows.
turning sanctuary
into a prison and
survival into
slow
lingering
wasted
death.
but my breath
will not be wasted.
and colours tasted
never forgotten
as long as I have words
and the will to use them.

DRAM

the smallest unit.
beauty and terror
in trace amounts....
it counts for little to our senses.
but its impact is immeasurable,
for it is undetectable and thus
gets past our guards.
shards of the fractured crystal heart
of a forgotten dragon.
flechettes that forget nothing
for they are soulless,
like so many lovers.
but I have seen your fire.
even banked, it burns on...
and I will warm myself one day
when amotations are again allowed
in the dreams of the waking dead.
until then,
let us drink our drinks of trace elements.
and I will teach you alchemy of the heart.

GLASS ROSES

conceive of a flower.
like no other.
no colour,
but the curving clarity,
the photic charity
of crystalline silence.
past the rainbow's violence.
a white fragrance,
white as a virgin's first kiss,
or the lost heartbeat I gave over
to the universe when
first we met,
when first I set my sails
for a new horizon,
passion and pride put down
and sacrificed
to the gods of love.
to the holders of dreams.
to the bearers of my gift.
to wings that take their lift
from the winds of sorrow.

a meadow of perfect blossoms
refracting the light you give me
onto a page of history and hope.
my brother, the night, takes me,
and I am not tomorrow anymore.

but my words endure.

pure

as a field of glass roses.
row upon perfect chaotic row
not discovered in this incarnation.

but they are out there.

BARE FEET ON A WOODEN FLOOR
(FROM "THE GOLDENHEART CYCLES")

I ate a daisy today. (to settle a bet between my child
and my wife if I could or would). Daddy is not so ancient
that he has forgotten the value of play in the lurking wild
of a newly discovered world. Mommy has been patient,
but loves and lives for and with this world, and late
at night, while our children sleep, goes on a date
with me in the kitchen, dancing strange emotions stored
in cookie jar hearts that never break. bare feet on a wooden floor.

DIOGENES

A light at night will cast a shade
of those who lurk in darkest grade,
against the walls, a tableau played
by actors frail and unafraid.

Weary feet now beat the stone
as penance we cannot atone,
a thinning sin reduced to dust
beneath the tread of those who trust.

Words that wrap and weave and stick
like sores upon a patient, sick,
the course and fate of this disease
is woven in our destinies.

A prophecy, a thought elusive
ought to stop the dreams, abusive.
The trojan hearse, on wheels of stone,
marks sure the road to hills of bone.

The saddest truth is yet revealed,
when earth is struck and bells are pealed.
We are but waiting for worms and kin
to strip this flesh, but leave this sin.

In whitest fog the dark remains,
a carnival for crimson stains,
and through it all we seek our path
to face our god or mortal wrath.

Beyond this dream, the shadow lurks,
the masque of death, with purpose, smirks,
to give to us our final kiss
a bon voyage, to pain or bliss.

A tragedy in endless acts,
a comedy that warps the facts,
a story told in pantomimes
to mock the living for their crimes.

So come with me and let us seek
a chain for victors, bread for the weak,
a gift once given, now withdrawn,
and just before the waited dawn.

You ask my name, I give it free,
Diogenes, now come with me.
Just follow hard upon my tread
and we shall find an honest bed.

I weep alone within my shell
for having heard the thunder's knell
for crimson womb I could not fill
but slipped away and mocked my will.

For shadows played in theater small
to represent the part, and all,
memories made and memories fell'd
by aching arms where once they held.

The line is drawn and pulled to break
like kisses we cannot forsake,
we serve our sentences alone
for all the sins we would atone.

Where shadows fall and shades now stalk
we stand in silence, make small talk,
of smaller thoughts and smaller prayers
that shrink before the unspoke dares.

Riddles ridden to the edge of the sky
where lovers chance and lovers die
in legends and in truth to tell
when breaking neath the mystics' spell.

Failed amomancies reveal the veil,
reveal the seal on folded sail,
that catches not the winds that brush
across the flesh of lover's flush.

Within the spell the shades will melt
to leave a skin of memories felt
and long forgotten, in perfect frame,
to be revealed in totem'd name.

Forget me not, forget me now,
a wink, I think, neath plucky brow
that raised the bar and raised the hell
and fractured me from out the shell.

Fleeing free we run to shore
to pose as Poes, and nevermore
in windows framed in curtains red
let morning sun illume a bed.

You ask my name, I give it now,
Diogenes, come with me now.
Just listen to my fading stride
that you may tell this tale with pride.

You would not lay on petals strewn
to validate my pensive ruin
and thus the tale was left to fray
a tapestry with feet of clay.

You send your scouts to mark the trail
we mark in stark with banshee's wail,
that woke the sleepers late at night
to fight a laugh at love's delight.

The pale, sweet girl with graveyard eyes
placed violets between her thighs
and called to me, to my surprise,
to take her turn at memory's lies.

And I could not resist the call,
trapped as I was, in misery's fall,
so penance did I pay for years
of anger's lash for coward's tears.

The spider sweeps with tender kiss
that bears the poison wrapped in bliss,
and draws the leper's blood to mark
a patch of moss in shaded park.

The search remains a constant quest
for hearts unplayed in passions' test
a requisite for legends bent
upon an anvil of unrest.

Brave Bragi boasts in rainbow terms
he dances well to quell the wyrms
and yet his sweat reveals his heart
is troubled by the humble dart.

Where Cupid plays as Loki's pet
to stop the heart of timeless set
and draw the wrath of bards and gods
who'd wagered on immortal odds.

That half a man can be astride
a horse, a course, a friend and bride,
 remarking off the mark a curse
that spins the winds to terse reverse.

You ask my name, I shall respond,
 Diogenes, back from beyond.
Take up your load and walk a ways
to take the silence from my days.

Chant the cant and chase the sky
 to where a Daedalus can die
 when Icarus becomes undone
by ancient evil's blotted sun.

And where and when shall stains remain
 and conversely, run off in rain,
the reign of fools and regents kept
as cards to play on pauper's bet.

Tigers and the cheetahs run
for being left out of the sun,
mythology amiss, amuck,
where currencies of love are struck.

The angels weep and shed their wings
to seek in pillows golden rings
that never come until they lie
and now their histories deny.

A pampered pawn emits a yawn
and plays the matador as faun,
a piper dances panicked tune
and ponders if the end comes soon.

Brass bars that bend when muscles flex
no longer bind the blind to vex
the souls once lost at cost to cast
a final die to wager Bast.

When falls the chips to slip away
returned to fight another day
we seek the sleek in leggy taunt
that coils tight to ever haunt.

And you remain a sheltered brand
that turns to burn the holding hand
unveiled to fail upon your call
in darkened end to cloistered hall.

Remain and soothe the silent pain
in cryptic tales that mock the vain,
while I lay stones to edge the trail
in alabaster, smooth and pale.

You ask my name, and give your word -
Diogenes, your secrets heard.
Learn well the lessons that you find
along the round that much shall wind.

The lamp is lit to find the way
and to illumine as if by day
the languid lurkers who repose
in tangled thorns of totem'd rose.

Sandalwood and jasmine blooms
to fill the corner of far rooms
in memory of what passed between
two lovers in the dark, unseen.

The mysteries and histories
designed to both now curse and please
the paramours and fading frauds
that sought to stride amongst the gods.

Lamps that light and lamps so bright
they blind us to the pith of night
and chase our fears back to the womb
where once we cradled naught but doom.

No cynic I, but truth does burn
its mark in stark to bid us turn
from paths of hope and prayers of love
to seek for us a prisoned glove.

The Amomancer sets the song
and we can all but sing along
until the tune unwinds the tale
of those who rise and those who fail.

Kisses cut into the thread
that winds the spindle in my head
to weave for touch and taste and scent
an image fair to represent.

Where cornered mystics miss their mark
for currencies of the coward's dark
where hides our guilt and shame and grief
and begs to buy a card's relief.

A butterfly can land for brief
and flutter by to no relief
to he who wants to see in clear
the patterns of the wings, drawn near.

You ask my name, it matters not,
Diogenes, so long you've sought.
And so the answers yet shall shade
til time will end this masquerade.

A kiss, amiss, to Delphi goes
to beg the priest to bless the rose
we left upon the bloodied sheet
from which there was no real retreat.

Cured and spurred, from pain inured,
the kitten cries, the cat has purred
and ancient tone of pleasure made
in darkened room or noon's parade.

Betrayal seems a twisted theme
a pattern not, but still a dream
too often damned by my own hand
in folly fled from final stand.

Clock work markings mock the time,
histories exposing hypocrite's crime.
Identity, a riddle wrought and writ,
read from cards of tapestry knit.

Is the price too high in wish to die
to break the bonds of ancient lie?
Must love subsist on the blood of a wrist
unpierc'd by the crucifist?

Teach to me Aphrodite's tongue
that I may speak in songs unsung,
stung like the spider, my flesh to feed
to the children of the victor's need.

The whipping boy a pose to seize
to rectify your father's disease,
penance for another's sin,
until bones crack, blacked from within.

Bury me while I still do breathe
and lay not on me plastic wreath
let history judge my laurels and crowns
as marks of the victor or the tears of clowns.

Scattered sands and withered hands
and the legacy of demanding glands,
arguing their case for war
under wedding veil in the bed of a whore.

You ask my name, I will reveal,
Diogenes, your fate to seal.
A seeker of an honest soul,
amongst the ruins I patrol.

From Jeremiah to Job and back
in the random rage of a plan of attack
that scatters not the scattershot
that marks the memory we'd forgot.

Cowards send our sons to die
and curse when we dare ask them why
they do not offer up their kin
to prove this move is not pride's sin.

Silence keeps its own respect,
to follow truths it won't inspect,
death dries the fountain where we drank
when blitzkrieg raged and bodies stank.

All I seek is a golden heart
to end this race I did not start
but which fell into unwilling lap
to link the hemispheric gap.

Weary now - my feet, they fail,
the shadow'd dawn is long to pale
and alleyway and stony street
cringe beneath my aching feet.

Diogenes, a curse and a calling,
with raped and rapid hearts now falling
like idols I never erected, suspected
by the ignorant, but undetected.

Summon the priest and give him the word,
spoken in silence, it lingers unheard,
absurd and mocking, stalking the frames
of our doors and our windows, exposing our shames.

I would find new nemicorn, illusion to dispel,
but would I leave menagerie behind, in hell,
rejecting the mantle of Orpheus, to refuse
to follow to the inevitable the Hero's bruise?

I cannot end this futile walk
that makes heads shake and gossips talk
while there is hope or dream or prayer
of finishing this destined dare.

You ask my name, so listen well,
Diogenes, your fate shall tell.
To take my quest and carry on
when bones are all the greet the dawn.

What of the child who has yet to learn
of that which bring their heart to burn?
What of the lovers, lost in the fire
that sparked in dark with wild desire?

Where shall I fall and to what cause
will I surrender, will I give pause,
when all around the pyres burn
to invoke for my return?

We must endure, we must ensure
that purpose to our path is pure,
and yet we cannot know the string
that pulls our hearts through everything.

Surreal, I feel, and yet I touch
the earth and sky with hands and such
I follow the precognizant memory
that was born before the Midgaard tree.

Split in twain and yet again, cut,
the angels caught in savage rut
cannot redeem beyond their fight
when the victims judge the wrong and right.

Carry back the fallen. carry them back,
to where the colours course from within black,
and turn to white in spectrums new
that harbour stones in the ruby blue.

Forgive me for my final sins,
last moments of rebellion, it begins
and ends in ignorance and arrogance,
this fated, sated, inflated dance.

The trance state transcends and God befriends
those whose action no one defends,
for in the end we are all corruption,
from conception through deception to absorption.

Drag dragons from their lair and care
to make their stare an icon to your dare
to tear scales for the epaulets of Orion,
child of the fates, the unheralded scion.

You ask my name, have you not heard,
Diogenes, this is my word.
Do not take issue with the goal,
unless you would deny your soul.

Prepare the path and take a rest
you'll find one mind is not a test
but seek the inner populi
your vox to vex your memory.

And I recall the every touch
of those who meant so very much
when words were tokens for the kiss
that yet unclaimed returns to this.

All the widows, all the saints,
all that holy water taints,
blood and flesh and sweat and tears
that paint a portrait of the years.

The lamp grows heavy with the time
and I have not yet ended the climb
up to the tower where I may see
the deserts and the Western sea.

Where tears remain to salt the flood
that could not seal the seeping blood
of sacrifices made for words
to cats and bats and stones and birds.

Lips and hips and fingertips
exploring my hearts each eclipse
when God remains to curse and frown
each flower plucked and then cast down.

Nunc dimittis? I won't depart
without some answers for my heart
of who was false and who was true
and if I learned from what I knew.

Dreamers dance like angels die,
pinheads that dread the soft reply
of feet and wings and subtle touch
that topple temples so, so much.

Leathery and feathery wings are spread
 into the wind, upon a bed
where heroes sleep with cowards, fled,
from purpose and to mock the dead.

You ask my name, I now reply,
 Diogenes, now tell me why
I cannot find and cannot claim
an honest heart in my domain.

Remember me to perfidy -
remember me to virtue, see,
and recollect all that you saw
that bent the thrust of moral law.

When cover rage fails and flesh will fade
 we'll sing a final serenade,
made of words and made of coins
extracted from the virgin's loins.

And I will spend not penny one
until the next song has begun
for I am not a rich man, yet,
I give it all to pay your debt.

Immortal dragons, standing stones,
we sit in pits with ancient bones
and argue not was yet shall be
but over arcane history.

My child, I wish that you would know
all that I've seen, without the blow
of falling hard against the earth,
inheriting the hard knocked birth.

You ask me for my blessing, now,
without the wisdom to know how
to spend the power you would request
without the proof of loving's test.

Show to me your worthy heart
then take and my staff, let us depart
to separate roads in separate spheres
and vivisect our joy and tears.

Present to me your evidence
of all you are, know no suspense,
just open wide your soul to me
that I may pass with dignity.

And knowing that my line maintains
in spite of all my failing stains,
accept the truth that fail we must
and yet again we rise from dust.

You ask my name, it matters non,
Diogenes, until I'm gone
will well suffice to be my brand
while I am dwelling in this land.

HEAL SWIFT

heal swift the aching wound
that keeps you far from me.
leave now the temples, ruined,
that once held perfidy.

grow strong and find your way
along life's pleasant roads.
in night or brightest day
stride tall with lightest loads.

be certain of your worth.
be fair to all you meet.
greet failure with rebirth.
greet folly with retreat.

place heart to ink to page
and speak with honest sound.
pour out the poisoned rage
and leave it on the ground.

I RAINED POETRY

there is no fear on the edge:
joy.

joy is what I find in the instants
between moments
when my feet are touching nothing but
sky
and the rocks recede
to return.
sooner or later.
driven by grave gravity
and the intemperate nature of natural law.
but
in the brisant moment,
leaping from
precipice to precipice,
I am reborn,
triggered and transfigured.

worn away are the chains of
the pains of
the stains of
mortal mediocrity
and I -
I am one with the clouds.

and I rain poetry.
(for that is my nature.)

as you turn your face skyward
to catch a few drops
on a tongue parched
by the dry air of memory
and the sun of shallow sentiments,
sold in the Hallmark rack
in the name of mass seduction.

and I rain poetry.

to irrigate the fields of forever
and make them ready for the seeds
planted without your realizing it
when you waved to me
as I ran the cliffs
high above the plains of stale acceptance.
and danced.
and danced.
and danced like a hurricane.
at the thought of you,
naked in the rain.

and I rained poetry.

bringing the thunder at the appropriate moment
when all other senses were spent
and only sound could
penetrate

the wet shell of overloaded synapses.

what passes for the echo

of fire that surged

and purged

the very ions of our irony.

and I rained poetry.

calling the winds to lift me.

to gift me with the words

that you would carry,

eroded into your sandstone soul.

nevermore the monolith,

but an aggregate of your essence

with flecks of my pitchblende.

bound to you by eloquence

that quenched an ancient thirst,

cursed to you

in a garden you will never see

except in the mirages of the maelstrom.

and I rained poetry.

and it was nothing.
compared to a single, honest kiss.
but it was,
in the absence of passion,
a worthy golem in the armies of solitude
up
on the cliffs
where I still dance with the winds.
and call the thunder.
even when no one watches.
or cares
or dares
to dance along.
(for that is my nature.)

AN ILLUSION OF GREY

there is an illusion of grey on eyes
that lost their way in the mists of love.
romantic hazes obscuring the colours
kissed by the morning and the night.

I see you in nectarine golds and reds
ripe as any blossom in a garden alive
with the passions you stir with a smile.

I dare not close my eyes for fear that
you will dance away with the will-o-wisp
memories of lovers unworthy and forgotten.

I will not lose my way, for you are incandescent,
and your light shows my path in perfect cut,
stone after stone after blessed stone to tread upon.

I perceive your beauty in spectra sudden
and sustained by words and a touch that blinds
me to all but you and all you would have me see.

I have sold my illusions and purchased eyes
with my passion, my obedience and my tenderness,
offerings to a goddess worthy of my worship.

there is an illusion of grey on eyes
that lost their way in the mists of love.
romantic hazes obscuring the colours
kissed by the morning and the night.

CHROMATIC METAPHORS

your skirt swirls in chromatic metaphors,
floors tilt and the flowers dare not wilt
in this atmosphere of fearless peers.
tears shed are dead and fall like barriers
to the Juggernaut of a karma cut from dreams.

I am destiny and memory.
and you are passion and delight.
the cost of hope, a prayerful salary
to the gods and goddesses of the night.

was that me who laughed, or was it you?
first, I mean, for we both fell to the moment,
motioned into the current of the challenge
of the deep balance of epitaphs unwound,
soundless as the eyes of angels, closed.

you are music and confection,
an allegoried perfection I dreamt of,
once, but never dared remember until now.
the sacred cow of a religion of romanticism.

the lights are casting shadows, somewhere,
but not here, not now, for nothing is hidden
and we are bidden to pass through the arch,
triumphant and tender, defenders of our hearts,
surrendered in the hypergolic heat of discovery.

HOLD YOU

May I hold you for an instant,
just an instant in forever?
May I feel my arms around you,
as you grant this small request?
I would feel I had accomplished
something true and fair and perfect,
if allowed to softly hold you
for an instant, in my arms.

May I hold you for a moment,
just a moment in forever?
To let our bodies speak with touch
the words we dare not to express?
Not too long and not too sudden
we would know so many answers
as the barriers would come crashing
down to melt and run away.

May I hold you for an hour,
just an hour in forever?
May I hold you for an hour,
feel the power of just your touch?
I could talk, or I could listen,
even if words were not spoken
in this token of the feelings
that were dancing in our spheres.

May I hold you until daybreak,
just till daybreak, not forever?
Just to sleep with you beside me
would be everything I need.
We could kiss, if you would dare it,
and see where the touching took us,
but only by permission
and your wishes I would heed.

May I hold you now forever,
until time and space surrender?
May I stand beside you always,
and protect you from the night?
It is much, I know, I'm asking,
to allow me to come nearer,
and I understand the nature
of your fears and destinies.

May I hold you for an instant,
just an instant in forever?
May I feel my arms around you,
as you grant this small request?
I would feel I had accomplished
something true and fair and perfect,
if allowed to softly hold you
for an instant, in my arms.

SOFT AS DAWN

and you came upon me.

soft as dawn,

bringing light into the corners

of a long and lonely night.

and you came upon me.

soft as dawn,

limbs warm and eager as was I

for a touch that means truth.

and you came upon me.

soft as dawn,

as open as I was, honest and sweet,

the heat more than friction and fiction.

and you came upon me.

soft as dawn.

and I was grateful for the glow

that saved my soul from despair.

and you came upon me.

soft as dawn.

and I worshipped you as a goddess of the morning.

CHRYSALIS

I will stand at
the foot of the tree
where hangs
your sheath of silk and leaves,
waiting for your emergence.
keeping at bay
the predators
and the rain
that may impede
your transcendence
to a new state.
I will hold you in cold nights
to keep you warm, and
shield you from the sun
when it is too harsh.
and, through it all,
I will nurture you
until you are ready.

ready to cast aside
your sheltering shell
and swell your iridescent
blue wings in the warming wind.
and emerge, if not perfect,
at least as breathtaking
to those who need a miracle
to find God would require
to understand
the shadow of perfection.

I will provide the wind,
the warmth to heal you
as you shed old skin
and paint your new form
with signs of your beauty.

and, I will be proud of you,
even if you fly away without
a look back.
even without a final night
before first flight.
even without a single kiss.

although I would wish for more,
these are your wings
to carry you where you
feel most at home.

SOUBRETTE

my heart blossoms and the petals are fragrant
like the wrists of a mistress,
stained and ordained with a perfume prepared
to meet the expectations of a lover.
my heart blossoms and the colours explode
in the spectrum of ancient light
caught at the far end of the universe, perceived new
but from the beginning, what always was.
my heart blossoms and all the thorns melt
and run into nothingness, for pain is not regent
in a world where there are the petals and fragrance
of your lips, ripe with emotion and hope.

DARE WE CROSS THE RUBICON?

dare we cross the Rubicon
that lays behind your door?
where sheets and skin and perfumed sin
shall draw us from the floor?
topple our frail dignities
of manners and restraint.
prove to us this fiery rush
is no false suitor's feint?

would you dare to see my scars
that run beneath the veil?
would you dare release your dreams
and climb, where others fail
to hold their breath until their death
is crescent to their prayers?
both barefoot and bare headed, bold,
to climb celestial stairs.

where heaven waits behind the gates
and passion is the key.
where wanting all is not the fall
if you trust your destiny.

dare we cross the Rubicon
that lays behind your door?
where sheets and skin and perfumed sin
shall call us, evermore.

CITY OF ANGELS

lost soul.
a city of lights of stimulated
noble gases. it passes
for a faux firmament.
I haven't seen an angel
here.
and probably,
never will.

but I have seen
poor, proud people,
their flannel workshirts
needing repair and a wash,
shuffling through the
immigrant neighborhoods.
the pretty girl, pretty no more,
selling her star power
in condom come-ons
on the street corner.

and I have seen a peaceful
ocean, kissing the sands
of time, worn like
strands of beige pearls
on the neck of a lady too
proud to admit the paste
will wash away in the rain.

love is bought here. sold
in carrying cases with
rouge and eyeliner. t-shirts
filled with silicone brush
the vanity from the wind
as rollerblades run down
bag ladies who never
gave that producer the
blowjob he asked for.

war zone. everyone
sells something. fortunately,
I am wise enough, and studied
well enough in the wars of the
sphere of Venus, I know I have
nothing of any real value.
which makes me the richest man
in the city of angels. until
I give out, give up, give in
to the inevitable.

NEMICORN

...and in my willful innocence I slit the fragile throat
of the Dreamhart, the nemicorn that bore me to my Rubicon.

Its blood, a shaft of crystal whispers, gave amotation
to the feelings I feared, and slew, out of time now gone.

the sniggering empaths capered no more, but lay in pain
among the orchids...crippled by the nemicorn's gentle
acceptance of my treachery and butchery. that placid brain
caring not for a vengeance of the visceral.

Dreamhart knew that time would slay me, time and regret
that would be mine when my all-too mortal form failed
in the icy waters, when I found my strength was set
against powers beyond me. when passion paled.

...and in my willful innocence I slit the fragile throat
of the Dreamhart, the nemicorn that bore me to my Rubicon.
Its blood, a shaft of crystal whispers, gave amotation
to the feelings I feared, and slew, out of time now gone.

EYES OF STAINED GLASS AND FIRE

There is a point in the arc of living lives parallel
where all the gifts of heaven and thoughts of hell
will not produce an image of provable clarity.
The charity of our prayers, visions taken alive
to be slowly cut down in the tortures we strive
to justify in meandering memories and prophecy.
Buying the worldview of others, sold in paper weighed
by scales that are irrelevant to truth. Parts played
on a stage we are forced upon, acting and reacting
to the directions out of confusion, the cool breeze
of our self-awareness blocked by the windbreak trees
we fooled ourselves into thinking as a clever thing,
to throw in the face of others. Ancient harmonies
reborn in an instant of illumination and honest desire
when one finally looks through eyes of stained glass and fire.

ALL THINGS TURN BROWN

all things turn brown. then black. then grey.
and in the winds, to blow away,
leaving not trace but memory
for us to mark our history.

the tread is soft in steps we leave.
we laugh. we love. we dare. we grieve.
the clock can not condemn our track
if we choose not to e'er turn back.

all things turn brown. then black. then grey.
and in the winds, to blow away,
leaving not trace but memory
for us to mark our history.

THE FIFTH SONG OF THE
AMOMANCER

"non gaudet super iniquitatem congaudet autem veritati"
truth speaks with a tongue that touches sky to horizon,
the sound, atomic, making sense of the silence.

where the ashes have scattered, let the winds have their way.
where the sweat has fallen, let it dry in the sun.
where kisses have lost their savour, let us not favour them with illusion.

love is not a word. not a word mortals coined for mortal concept,
but an abstract refraction of the truth that transcends us all.
an end to complexity. the simplicity of an honest theology.

there are answers to the questions that we fear.
there are dancers in the darkness that draw near.
there are words that will comfort all who hear.

but we are creatures of hard-wired synaptical repetition,
musicians of a handful of stones and sticks, beating time
until the clockwork genes expire like an amnesty for the guilty.

I see no less unobscured than yesterday, but with a willingness
to accept what I see as a part of my heart and marrow,
the taste of bitter kiss on irrelevant saints' feet, sweet only to the faithful.

"non gaudet super iniquitatem congaudet autem veritati"
one miracle per supplicant, the one-eyed genii masks his blindness
by rapid whirlwind turns in the billowing smoke of his grand entrance.

here we are. there we were. and where we shall be when tomorrow
becomes yesterday's mythology I have no notion not yet defiled,
beguiled by a desire to make more of something than the nothing of sand.

yet even in the furnace the sand turns to glass, to be shaped
by the craftsman and artisan into things of great beauty or utility,
but only by the consent of the molten mass, ready from the heat to find purpose.

I pull my hand from the fire, wet with the forge's flow,
I pull my hand from the fire, knowing now what I know,
I pull my hand from the fire, and harden it in the blacksmith's snow.

tempered heart to match the flesh, to bind the mesh
of suet left for the pecking birds and foraging beasts.
a sacrifice for a price a fraction of not learning the lessons in time.

I am well, and the temple folds upon itself, magic and prophecy,
tools for drawing the crowd, not curing the lame and sick and blind,
that is the work of prophets and wanderers and legends of old on newer paths.

"non gaudet super iniquitatem congaudet autem veritati"
and I know what I know, and I feel what I feel, at honest peace.
released to the dandelion winds of a coming spring.

THE PATCHWORK SKIRT OF MY LOVE

the sound of soft fingertips across the strings of a lute.
strumming the memories. humming the melody of life.
and I am lost in the possibilities of your presence,
pleasant, peasant prayers that lead to the summit
of the mountain in the distance, where legends reign.

kings cannot know this brandywine. princes pass perplexed.
and all the bishops seem ignorant of the nature of God
when their ignorance of the crux of creation is displayed,
paraded in the sudden dance of a smiling child by the fire.
and I am lost in the reverent reveries of this revelation.

play for me that melody, the one you tried to teach me,
you tried to reach me with when I despaired of lost love
and the angels and faeries all seemed annoying pinpoints
that pricked and stuck and stole the moment that was mine
and you came for me, barefoot and arrogant, like a poet.

William F. DeVault - INVOCATO

and the fires swam into the sky and I, I was reborn.
torn to pieces and re-assembled like a patchwork skirt
to brush your bare legs in the summer heat and to defeat
the angry winds that would come down from the mountains,
mounting the horses of hoarfrost to charge your charms.

I live now, in more than just abstract recollections of a score
of forgetful lovers who would not give me second thought
were it not for the trinkets of my words they wear as bright badges
as they tell their tales of the pale blue moon of memory.
and they don't wear the patchwork skirt of my love. or play the lute.

LOVE GODS OF A FORGOTTEN RELIGION

Apollo pales and sails across a sky of colours intricate,
slate grey and a blue like the eyes of Aphrodite,
impregnating memory with a starting point for blending,
bending the spectrum into greens of life and the violets of passion.

And in those times we are the love gods of a forgotten religion,
mythic mysteries that stir the slip of idols to be cast for a past
we abruptly dropped, like a half-perfected statue of a cat goddess,
modesty growing moss on stones that slide deep into the silence.

They are recalled, they and their kin, for they left their stones,
their temples, their tales of heroes and heroics. Permanent subtext
for the muscles of imagination flexed in a show of strength,
the length of thought caught not of the brambles of distraction.

With incantata'd prayers we are the love gods of a forgotten religion,
chants and cants and my how we prance without pants in the trance of
our blood chemistry going to alchemy in the laboratory of evolution, our
homonocentric heresies forsworn for the priests of a fed hunger.

We shall not leave such Olympian statuary, nary clue will endure
that with motives pure and thoughts unsure we cured Gordius
of the intricacies of logical whim, the sword of Alexander
ample answer to the recent regent riddles of barren paramours.

For on these shores we are the love god of a forgotten religion,
knowing that, in the eyes of the romantique, a pigeon is a dove,
pure and perfect sacrifice for the price of kisses bartered for blessings
spread in an holy oil of the skin, shared in an heated suspension.

Freya passes and serenades of Bragi are unrecorded, paper faded
and temperaments jaded in the ironic skepticism of youth and truth
obscured by desire, fire to a pyre of inconvenient hopes that rope us
in a bound harness of caresses cauterizing our bleeding, needy hearts.

We. Are. We are. We are. We are love gods of a forgotten religion.
the idols are left as curiosity for tourists yet unborn, shorn of tableau
like a Nazarite's hair, heir to the wonderment of children and lovers,
innocents seeking answers that they alone can understand and cherish.

TOUCH NOT THE WALLS

touch not the walls that I have set
to keep you out, to my regret.
I need them there to keep me sane
against the knowledge of the pain.

touch not the walls that I have built
of shadowed rage and patient guilt.
I've sculpted them of faded day
that I might keep the past in play.

touch not the walls that I endure
for actions rash and thoughts impure.
my prison shell, my private hell,
the place, this face, wherein I dwell.

ABOUT THE AUTHOR

William F. DeVault was born August 16, 1955, in Greenville, South Carolina, in the United States of America. He was raised in a military family, living in various locales, but counts his parents' hometown of Morgantown, West Virginia, where he spent more than a decade, as home.

He began writing poetry at age 8, discovering the power of romantic poetry at age 17. Over the next few years he wrote some of his most important foundation works, including "The Unicorns" and "Monument".

In 1996, as his cult following was beginning to blossom under the distribution of elements of his "Panther Cycles" on the world-wide web, he constructed his first website and was named the "Romantic Poet of the Internet" by Yahoo.

One of the first authors to recognize the power of the Internet as the fulcrum for a new renaissance, he has published several books and toured from New York to Los Angeles, from Boston to Mobile. His years in Venice Beach were extremely formative to his writings.

Twice married and divorced, he has three children of his first marriage.

Along the way he has worked for various consulting firms in the information technology fields, particularly as a proposal writer, where his gift for the language has served his clients well. He is a champion of new poetic voices, having mentored many young poets.

In 2004 the Appalachian Education Initiative named him to their list of 50 outstanding creative artists from the State of West Virginia.

2005 sees the publication of his sixth, seventh and eighth books.

And he still, through it all, believes in love, truth and God.